



PRESS RELEASE

May 17, 2007

Attacking workers' rights will not fix Nova Scotia's health care system

Halifax-N.S. - "Government's publicly announced intent to take away and undermine health care workers' collective bargaining rights is but another example of a government without a real understanding or capacity to deal with the many issues facing Nova Scotians today," said Rick Clarke, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.

Clarke said there is indeed a crisis in health care, but it is not from workers exercising their right to strike. Nova Scotians are experiencing far more losses in health care services across the province through lack of government support and financing than they are because of strikes or lockouts.

The unions that represent the workers, who provide such excellent health care to Nova Scotians, have a long standing offer to government to be a part of a process to address the true problems being experienced in the delivery of health care in Nova Scotia – to work together to make the system more efficient.

"The government's overreaction to a one-day strike reeks of opportunism; of a floundering government attempting to find or do something that may find them favour with the public and I believe they have missed the mark again," said Clarke. "Nova Scotians who have experienced the excellent care provided by these dedicated workers know only too well how committed they are to providing this service and this unwarranted attack will not sit well with the public.

"Our Health Care sector has a low experience rate of loss time due to strikes or lockouts, even compared to provinces that restrict this action and in fact, Nova Scotia has one of the best labour stability records in the country, despite the efforts or actions of government – where is the justification of this attack?"

"Rather than attempt to create or justify an action as a feeble effort to raise their stock with Nova Scotians, government should focus on the true needs that people are crying out for government action; to look out for the interest of Nova Scotians.

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Clarke continued: “Not only is this announced action unjustified, it is also irresponsible as this publicity event is already having a negative impact on internal relations in these workplaces, turning around relations -- it clearly pays to think before you act.

“Where is the premier, where is the determination and where is the fight with the Harper Government over the Offshore Accord; who, supported by some Nova Scotia MPs, is reneging on the agreement originally negotiated? Where is our provincial government as literally thousands of direct and indirect jobs are being lost in our goods producing/manufacturing sector, with the announced closures of Trenton Car Works in Pictou County, Moirs Chocolate Plant in Dartmouth and Maple Leaf Processing Plant in the Valley – job losses that are having a devastating impact on workers, their families and communities? Their silence is deafening.

“We will be responding to government’s intended attack on workers’ collective bargaining rights in the appropriate manner and time and we would urge government to focus on these economic/peoples’ issues, responding in the appropriate manner and timely fashion; workers, families and communities await to hear your voice and support,” Clarke said in conclusion.

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